ATLAS LINGUARUM EUROPAE (ALE)

sous la rédaction de

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VOLUME I – COMMENTAIRES

quatrième fascicule

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sous les auspices de l'UNESCO

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ALE I 4

This fourth volume of our series comes out one year after the third, and is the last to be published by Van Gorcum & Co. of Assen. Also the maps of this volume are the last to be printed by the IfAG of Frankfurt. On this occasion, it is my duty to convey, on behalf of the ALE, the expression of our gratitude to both our Dutch publishers and to our West German cartographers, for the long cooperation and for the splendid way they have performed their task.

Differences between ALE I 4 and previous volumes

Unlike those of previous volumes, which were computer drawn[1], the maps of ALE I 4 have been drawn by hand. The drawing has been done by different people in different places: for 'coccinelle' by Mr. Carlos Madeira, Campo Archeologico de Mértola, under the supervision of Manuela Barros Ferreira, for 'concombre' by Mr. Heinz Laackman, University of Marburg, under the supervision of Reiner Hildebrandt, for 'montagne', 'mûre' and 'pin' by Mr. Slobodan Kablarević, Belgrade, under the supervision of Pavle Ivić. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the cartographers for their work, and the supervisors for their willingness to assist us in editing the maps of this volume. These hand-made maps represent a transition period between the computer-made maps of the first three volumes, and the computer-made maps of the next volumes.

Questions, maps and commentaries

Though the length of the commentaries of our volumes has always varied[2], the difference in size between the commentary on 'coccinelle' and the other ones of this volume may strike the reader as unusual. Hence a few words of comment on the relationship between the questions and their treatment, on the one hand, and that between maps and commentaries, on the other. Elaborating on what I already wrote in the *Introduction* to ALE I 1, I would

[1] For the special technique used for ALE I 3 see the *Introduction* to that volume.
[2] Except for the first volume, the commentaries of which had been originally conceived as to be printed on the back of the maps, and thus were all of a very limited size.

commentaries there are several constants and variables.

(I) In the tradition of geolinguistics there has always been a fixed, one-to-one relationship between questions and maps, but this constant was connected with the central role played by raw-data atlases in the development of geolinguistics. As an interpretive atlas, the ALE had to break with it. From a theoretical point of view, only a raw-data map stands in a biunivocal relationship with a given question. Interpreting the data may require more than one map, depending on the complexity of the question, or that of the materials, and of course on the author's view of the problem.

(II) Questions as such can vary greatly in their historical and cultural significance. The literature on the subject may be rich or wanting. Editorially speaking, I see no real difference between an 'interpretive-atlas questionnaire', i.e. a small lexicon, each entry of which must be accompanied by maps and a commentary, and any other historical dictionary or encyclopaedia, in which entries always vary in length and depth, depending on the interest of the entry.

(III) The difference between onomasiological treatment and motivational treatment – the latter being a basic innovation introduced by the ALE in the field of geolinguistics[3] – brings another variant in the picture, the consequences of which are easy to assess.

(IV) Even within the field of motivational treatment, there is yet another variant, since motivations can be few, or extremely numerous, as is the case for 'coccinelle'.

(V) Assessing the work required for ALE maps and commentaries can be difficult for people who have no experience with interpretive cartography. At first sight, the commentaries may seem to require most of the work, while maps may look like an easy job. The contrary is true. The time required for map making is much greater than the writing of a commentary. Sorting and studying the plurilinguistic materials, by definition numerous and at least in part unfamiliar; grouping them etymologically (and if the treatment is motivational, classifying further the etyma by motivations), which is the lengthiest and most difficult operation; choosing the symbols for each category, in such a way that mutual relationships are emphasised; trying alternative solutions in the classification and in the symbology; finalising all details for computerised cartography: all of this, and much else, requires by far the greatest part of the time involved in a single contribution. When it comes to motivational mapping, added problems may present themselves. More often than not, the

[3] There are many 'motivational' maps *avant la lettre* in the history of geolinguistics, such as the ones covering the whole world, drawn by the Finnish Matti Kuusi for his monograph on 'Regen bei Sonneschein', Helsinki 1957 (FF Communications n.o. 171). And these are by far not the earliest ones. But the theory and methodology of motivational mapping has been formulated in explicit terms only within the ALE.

simplest motivations are the ...
interpret all the 'ladies' that underlie so many names of the ladybug? Do the ladies come before or after the Christian Maries? Why does an insect have such an enormous amount of religious names? Is there a relationship between the ladybug names and the hundreds of children rhymes that scholars have been collecting and publishing in the last decennia? Can one bring some order and sense in the hundreds of different motivations for the ladybug names? Of course, trying to answer such questions is not compulsory, and a mere listing would also be useful, but if the ALE wants to contribute to the establishment of new methods and new horizons in the field of linguistics, it is only good that such attempts are made. And once an author decides to give it a try, he will soon discover that it is impossible to deepen a study on such a large scale as the whole of Europe without entering other areas, such as cultural amthropology, history of religions, folklore, folk literature and the like. Once again, all this will have to be done before, and not after, mapping. In short, writing the commentary is more a descriptive than a creative effort.

(VI) A most important variable in the picture is represented by authors: it is extremely difficult to find authors for ALE maps and commentaries. The main reasons may be sought in the difficulties already mentioned, but have also something to do with the state of the art: historical linguistics is on the whole, and on a world scale, on the decline. The number of specialists in IE comparative linguistics is already small, and is not bound to grow for the time being. True, historical and comparative interlinguistics as practiced within and without the ALE is one of the innovations that may bring new life in the field, but just because it is new, it does not have many followers, nor does it have a place in university curricula. Most IE comparativists are familar with old or literary languages, and not with modern dialects. Conversely, dialectologists, by the very nature of their expertise, do not usually go beyond the frontiers of their own language group. Irrespective of their specialism, succesful scholars with an interest in cultural history, who would be interested in contributing to the ALE, are usually – and obviously – heavily committed. Besides being difficult and time-consuming, ALE work is also unpaid.

All in all, this is why ALE commentaries will always vary in length. Incidentally, this is also why it proves impossible to 'plan' authors contributions, and thus to publish questions in their numerical order. But this is also why it is so important to show what the ALE can produce, when the question and the materials lend themselves to an interesting analysis.

Changes in the ALE organisation

After the inauguration of the Central Secretariat in Florence, Italy, in January 1989, and after the writing of the *Introduction* to the previous volume of ALE I 3, one major change has taken place in the organisation of the ALE: the

Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato of Rome will take over the computer plotting, the printing of the maps as well as of the commentaries, the publishing and the financing of the publication, for the remaining six volumes of the ALE, and thus starting from ALE I 5. To give a more exact idea of the significance of this agreement, it is useful to remember that the Poligrafico commitment will replace the previous commitment and task of four different institutions, namely the NVO as financers of the publication costs, Van Gorcum as publishers, the IfAG as cartographers, and Marburg as computer center. Formalisation of the agreement will take place before publication of ALE I 5, presumably in the course of the present year.

In 1989, an 'ALE association' was officially registered in Italy, with the aim of creating a juridical personality for the ALE, necessary for her dealings with various institutions, private and governmental.

ALE meetings

Two meetings have taken place in the period between publication of ALE I 3 and 4: the plenary meeting of St-Vincent, Aosta Valley, in June 1989, and the meeting of the Directing Board at Schellhorn, in October 1990. The meeting at St-Vincent was particularly important since it enabled the numerous dialectologists who were present to approve the statutes of an International Society for Dialectology and Geolinguistics. Although this Society, which in the meantime has been officially registered, is totally independent from the ALE, it could not have been started without the structure and the experience built up in the course of twenty years of international cooperation within the ALE. We thank the organisers of these two meetings: the Regional Government of the Aosta Valley, and Prof. Werner Winter of the University of Kiel.

For updated listings of net-points, languages and dialects, see the introductory parts of ALE I 3. For other general information see the first two volumes.

MARIO ALINEI
January 1990